



AETC News Clips

Air Force Times



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September 12, 2005

Maintaining quality of AETC is his priority, new commander says

By [Rod Hafemeister](#)

Times staff writer

SAN ANTONIO — The new commander of Air Education and Training Command takes the job at a time when up to 85 percent of airmen may be in harm's way within a year of leaving training.

His new job is exciting and challenging, Gen. William R. Looney III told reporters Aug. 30.

Looney took command of AETC from Gen. Donald G. Cook on June 17.

AETC provides the best training of any air force in the world, Looney said, and he intends to keep it that way.

"There's no doubt there are people who would like to take our place," he said. "We influence a lot of foreign air forces. Everybody wants to come to the U.S. for training."

With about 95,000 officers, enlisted, civilians and contractors, AETC is the second largest command in the Air Force. Its job is to train airmen for the demands of today and tomorrow, Looney said.

In the post-Sept. 11 world, AETC has to do the best job it can training airmen, Looney said, because the heavy Air Expeditionary Force schedule means the probability is "very good" that 80 percent to 85 percent of them will be in harm's way within a year of their training.

"Our job is to ensure that they will execute the mission damn near perfectly — but that they also will come back," he said.

The AEF concept was a dramatic change from the forward basing of the Cold War era. Today, airmen must be able to deploy to a bare base for 90 days or longer, taking all the essentials to get the base up and running.

The AEF was the key to Air Force response in the global war on terrorism and, although it has largely been a success, there are improvements to be made, Looney said.

"The maturity level now, I would say, is about 80, 85 percent," he said.

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Besides teaching air expeditionary skills, AETC has to instill in young airmen an expeditionary mind-set, similar to the Navy teaching sailors their primary mission is to spend months at sea, he said.

"When I first came in, there wasn't any concept that four months, five months out of every two years I'd be deployed to some godforsaken place," he said. "Today, about 85 percent of the 360,000 people in the Air Force are deployable."

At the same time, the Air Force needs to guard against letting the pendulum swing too far in the direction of fighting terrorism, he said — there's still a need for modern, conventional weapons systems and airmen prepared to fight a more conventional conflict, if one occurs.

Looney is an example of the kind of broadly experienced commander envisioned under the Air Force's program of directed force development.

After graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1972, Looney began his career flying AC-130 gunships out of Thailand.

After a tour as a T-38 instructor pilot, he transitioned to F-15s, ultimately commanding fighter wings at Eglin and Langley Air Force bases.

He also did a couple of tours at the Pentagon, one on the Air Staff and one with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and was commandant of the Armed Forces Staff College. He was commander of 14th Air Force and Component Commander of Space Air Forces in U.S. Space Command, and commanded the electronic Systems Center and Aeronautical Systems Center at Air Force Materiel Command before taking over AETC.

Besides training and education, AETC oversees the Air Force Recruiting Service.

Unlike the ground services, which are facing recruiting challenges as the war in Iraq continues, the Air Force is on track to get the 34,000 to 35,000 enlisted recruits programmed for fiscal 2006, with about 20 percent of the quota under contract. The service expects to have 43 percent to 45 percent by Oct. 1, Looney said.

Overall, Looney thinks AETC is doing well and his plan is to keep it that way.

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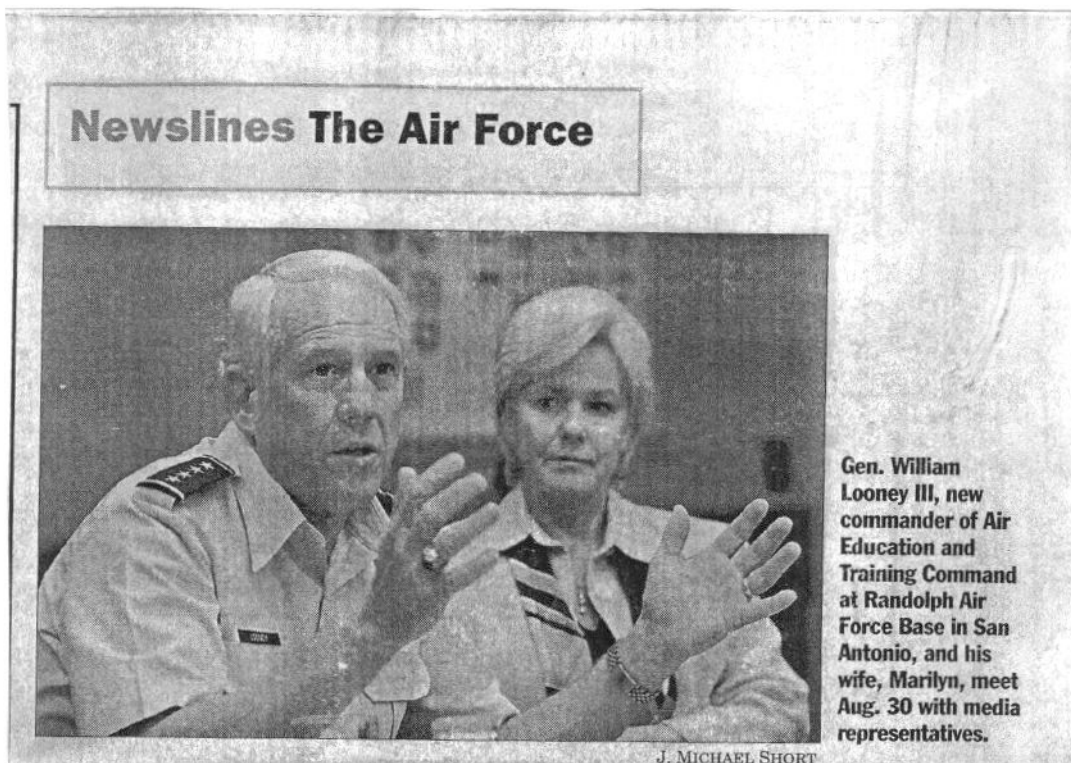
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"This is the one organization that truly is going to influence the Air Force of 20 to 30 years from now," he said.



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08 Sep 05

Pilot faulted in Pave Hawk crash

By [Bruce Rolfsen](#)

Times staff writer

An Air Force helicopter instructor pilot is being faulted in the death of his crew chief in the crash May 11 of an HH-60 Pave Hawk on a training mission that turned into a sightseeing flight, according to an accident investigation board report.

Maj. Larry J. Ouellette of the 58th Special Operations Wing, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., flew the helicopter too low as he maneuvered the aircraft into a turn, the report said. During the turn, Ouellette lost control of the Pave Hawk and it crashed.

A spokesman for Air Education and Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, said the commander of the 58th, Col. Thomas J. Trask, "is reviewing his prerogatives" regarding any disciplinary actions.

Ouellette was turning the Pave Hawk in order for flight engineer, Tech. Sgt. Scott A. Bobbitt, also of the 58th, to get a better view of a helicopter on display at the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial at Angel Fire, N.M. When the Pave Hawk hit the ground, Bobbitt was ejected from the main cabin and fatally injured. After the impact, the Pave Hawk caught fire and was destroyed.

Bobbitt was retiring from the Air Force and the mission was to have been one of his last flights.

Other factors that led to the accident included unfavorable weather conditions and general complacency of the flight crew, both in planning and executing the mission, the investigation found.

Ouellette and co-pilot Capt. John M. De Sir were treated for minor injuries at a local hospital and released the same day.

The accident investigation board was headed by Col. Mark S. Solo, commander of the 97th Air Mobility Wing, Altus Air Force Base, Okla.

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September 12, 2005

Katrina slams Keesler Flood forces thousands off base

By **Bruce Rolfen**

Times staff writer

Hurricane Katrina knocked out operations at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., one of the Air Force's largest training installations.

Although none of the 6,000 airmen and family members who rode out the storm at Keesler on Aug. 29 lost their lives, damage to the base was so widespread that thousands of students who couldn't leave ahead of the storm were being sent elsewhere as Keesler recovers.

And airmen with orders to start classes at Keesler or to move there are under orders to stay away until further notice.

"Right now, our primary mission is to get the base operational," the commander of Keesler's 81st Training Wing, Brig. Gen. William Lord, told airmen who had hunkered down with him through Katrina.

Keesler is one of the Air Force's primary technical schools. About 5,000 airmen attend courses there each day in career fields such as air traffic control, personnel, electronics repair, finance, communications, medical care and manpower.

Teaching and caring for those students is a staff of about 6,200 airmen and 3,600 civilians.

Keesler also is home to the service's second-largest hospital and the Air Reserve's 403rd Wing, whose 1,400 members are known as the "Hurricane Hunters." The 403rd flies WC-130s into storms at sea to gauge the storms' strength and track their movements.

The unit's aircraft flew at least 16 missions into the growing storm while it developed over the gulf, and then deployed to bases in Texas before Katrina hit land.

As of Sept. 2, officials were inspecting buildings and equipment, but no one could estimate the damage costs or say when classes could resume, said David Smith, spokesman for the Air Education and Training Command.

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Katrina's storm surge flooded Keesler's stores, classrooms and aircraft hangars with water up to 6 feet deep, according to base officials. In the base housing area, homes near Biloxi Bay were engulfed by waves that toppled walls.

With much of the surrounding city of Biloxi in ruins, the base had no water, commercial electricity, cell phone or telephone service. It could be late September before commercial electrical power is restored, Keesler airmen were advised.

Brig. Gen. James A. Whitmore, commander of the 82nd Training Wing at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, said base officials expect about 1,400 students to be sent there from Keesler.

For Keesler's corps of instructors and support personnel, the mission was to get essential base functions going. By Sept. 1, the Magnolia Dining Facility was open for hot lunches and a mini-base exchange was being organized.

Airmen and their families who lived off base were allowed to return to their homes, if they had a home to return to.



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September 12, 2005

Ex-wife allegedly refusing to testify in Shue case

By [Rod Hafemeister](#)

Times staff writer

SAN ANTONIO — The mysterious death of Air Force Col. (Dr.) Philip Shue is taking another strange turn, with his ex-wife allegedly planning to refuse to testify in a civil lawsuit deposition despite the fact the case has been officially ruled a suicide.

Jason Davis, the attorney for Shue's widow, Tracy Shue, made that claim during a Sept. 1 hearing on various motions in the civil lawsuit that arose from the death more than two years ago.

"We plan to depose [ex-wife] Nancy Shue, but her attorney has advised that she plans to take the Fifth [Amendment]," Davis said.

Nancy and Tracy Shue have already reached a settlement in their lawsuits against each other, and Kendall County Justice of the Peace Nancy White in June issued a long-awaited death certificate, listing the death as a suicide.

Davis also told the court that he intends to depose Dr. Vincent DiMaio, the medical examiner who originally declared the death a suicide, as well as White, an Air Force Office of Special Investigations agent and the primary author of a psychological autopsy of Philip Shue prepared by the military.

Tracy Shue has argued since her husband's death in 2003 that he was murdered and believes Nancy Shue, who stood to get \$1 million in insurance proceeds, should be a suspect.

The settlement between the two wives, and one between Tracy Shue and Northwestern Mutual Insurance Company, are sealed under confidentiality agreements.

Tracy Shue filed a suit in June 2003 to block payment to Nancy Shue from two insurance policies, citing death threats her husband allegedly had received warning him that he would be killed for the insurance.

Nancy Shue countersued, claiming Tracy Shue was guilty of tortious interference, keeping her from receiving money rightfully hers under a 1992 divorce decree.

Virtually all information in the case has been sealed under a confidentiality order issued in August 2004 by Kendall County Court-at-Law Judge Bill Palmer.

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But in the interim, all parties have reached settlements except Tracy Shue and USAA, which had a \$500,000 insurance policy on Philip Shue payable to his ex-wife. Palmer released the insurance proceeds, which had been held in escrow by the court, to Nancy Shue in June.

The hearing was on motions by USAA to see the contents of the settlements. Palmer decided he would review the settlements privately and decide what, if anything, USAA was entitled to have for its case.

The attorney for USAA argued that Tracy Shue's case is dependent on her husband having been murdered. But Davis countered that, while Tracy Shue believes it was murder, the case is based on the claim that USAA failed to investigate when Philip Shue informed them he was receiving death threats and asked that the policy be canceled.

Philip Shue, a 54-year-old psychiatrist at Wilford Hall Medical Center, died in a bizarre car crash on April 16, 2003.

The cause of death was severe head injuries caused when the car hit a tree.

But emergency responders also found that he had strips of duct tape hanging from his wrists and ankles, and that his chest had been cut and his nipples cut off.

Investigators have been unable to account for more than two hours between the time he left for work and the time of the accident near San Antonio. Although he had left for Wilford Hall, he was driving erratically on the highway to Boerne, a commuter community north of San Antonio, when he crashed.

Investigators also have copies of apparent death threats Shue started receiving in 1999.

An autopsy by DiMaio, the Bexar County medical examiner, declared that Shue committed suicide, but a second autopsy paid for by Tracy Shue and performed by Dr. Cyril Wecht, a prominent forensic pathologist, declared it was likely a homicide.

DiMaio cited the presence of a strong topical anesthetic as evidence that Shue had inflicted the wounds on himself. But later tests showed that a key component of the compound allegedly used was missing.

The investigation, by Kendall County sheriff's deputies, was hampered from the start by the failure to initially treat the crash as a crime scene.

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Texas Rangers and the FBI eventually were involved in lab tests, but results were inconclusive.

Sheriff's investigators were convinced they had a homicide on their hands, but with little evidence and no clear suspects, the investigation stalled and currently is in limbo.

In the August 2004 hearing, Palmer cited the "unusual set of facts" in the case and said the estate was attempting to determine if Nancy Shue had financial problems that might support a claim of civil conspiracy in the death.

Palmer said evidence submitted in the case indicated Nancy Shue took out loans against the insurance policies. But he also imposed the confidentiality order that has kept the case under wraps ever since.



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September 12, 2005

Talking BRAC: Who's gaining, losing planes

By [Bruce Rolfson](#)

Times staff writer

While the high-profile effort to close Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., was turned back by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, most Air Force recommendations got the panel's blessing.

During Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper's final press briefing before retiring Sept. 2, Jumper estimated that the service got about 70 percent of what it had asked for from the BRAC panel.

"In Washington, I've never seen 100 percent," Jumper said. "If you get 50 percent, it's usually pretty good."

The Air Force couldn't get the BRAC panel to go along with most of the proposals for Air Guard installations. Only 34 of the original 72 recommendations for Air Guard bases were approved.

The wholesale changes to the Air Guard plan don't signal an end to the Air Force's Future Total Force effort, which is geared at putting airmen into emerging missions such as command-and-control and Predator operations.

The Air Force is now looking at how the BRAC commission manpower and aircraft recommendations will affect Future Total Force, said Lt. Col. Mike Odom, a spokesman for the Future Total Force office.

Among changes the Air Force BRAC panel agreed to were:

- Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., trades its KC-135 tanker mission for remote-controlled Predators around 2010.
- Moody Air Force Base, Ga., gains two A-10 squadrons, receiving aircraft from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and several other bases.
- Pope's active-duty C-130s leave for Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., and are replaced by Reserve or Guard transports.
- The Air Force's largest hospital, Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, closes.

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- Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, sees much of its medical training mission made part of a joint school at the Army's Fort Sam Houston in Texas.
- Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., becomes home to the Joint Strike Fighter school.
- Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, becomes exclusively an F-15E Strike Eagle base, giving up its F-16s and F-15Cs.

The BRAC panel's recommendation to keep 24 B-1B Lancer bombers at Ellsworth wasn't the only decision on active-duty bases that went against the Air Force's wish list.

The panel voted not to move C-130s from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, to Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. The commission also rejected plans to close Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., and move F-16s out of Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska.

While Cannon will stay open, the base is losing its F-16s, leaving the base with no flying mission. No one is certain what will replace the jets to justify keeping the base open.

The Air Force has no replacement mission on the horizon for Cannon.

The only Air Force flying mission that is expanding soon is the use of remote-controlled Predators. The Air Force wants to establish 15 Predator squadrons. About half of those squadrons have already been promised to bases in Nevada, Arizona, Texas, New York and North Dakota.

While Cannon could support an active-duty Predator unit, the base's long distance from major cities or airports makes it an unlikely candidate for a Reserve or Air Guard Predator unit.

The Air Force is also considering proposals to hire a contractor to teach the first phase of pilot and navigator flight school at a single location. The site of the school hasn't been determined — however, each of the bidders has submitted their preferred sites.

New Mexico political leaders are suggesting Cannon could become home to a Joint Strike Fighter wing or turned over to the Army as a satellite base for Fort Bliss, near El Paso, Texas, and 300 miles from Cannon.



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September 12, 2005

Regni selected to become academy superintendent

By [Laura M. Colarusso](#)

Times staff writer

The president has named a successor for outgoing Air Force Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. John Rosa, who was selected last June to be the next president of The Citadel.

If confirmed by the Senate, Lt. Gen. John Regni, commander of the Air Force's Air University, will replace Rosa as the top officer at the academy. Regni's nomination was announced Aug. 30.

Regni would succeed Rosa at a time when the academy is in the midst of sweeping changes designed to restore confidence in the school following a sexual assault scandal that erupted in early 2003.

The academy has also been in the national spotlight because of what Air Force officials have called instances of over-the-line proselytizing by cadets, faculty and staff in positions of authority.

In the past two years, the school has also endured a rash of drug and cheating cases. Two football players and three other students were charged with steroid-related violations. Nineteen cadets were found guilty of sharing answers for a basic military knowledge test.

The academy welcomes Regni's nomination, said academy spokesman Johnny Whitaker in a written statement.

"His background as a commander and in the education and training side of our Air Force should make for a seamless transition to [superintendent] and allow him to continue the progress the USAFA team has made the past two years," Whitaker wrote.

Regni declined to comment through a spokesman.

Prior to taking command at Air University, Regni was the commander of 2nd Air Force from August 2000 to July 2004 at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. He is a 1973 graduate of the academy and has had several personnel, training and command positions throughout his three decades in the Air Force. He was base commander at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, and has served on Air Staff and joint unified command levels.

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Maj. Gen. Stephen Lorenz has been nominated to succeed Regni at Air University. If confirmed, Lorenz would be promoted to lieutenant general

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Raptor begins next testing phase

The F/A-22 Raptor began follow-on operational test and evaluation Aug. 29 at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center officials at the base will evaluate the Raptor in several areas, including air-to-ground capabilities and its suitability for deployment by C-17 Globemaster IIIs.

The center will test seven operationally representative Raptors at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; White Sands Missile Range, N.M.; and the Utah Test and Training Range through late fall. An official report on the testing will follow 45 days after test completion.



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Laughlin AFB, Texas



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DEL RIO NEWS HERALD

LAFB advocates hear whispers of discontent

[By Bill Sontag](#)

Published September 7, 2005, p.1

With a powerful voice, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson argued long and loud on behalf of Cannon Air Force Base at BRAC meetings in Crystal City, Va., Aug. 25-27. And Laughlin Air Force Base expansion plans were nearly slashed by surprising proposals aimed at saving Cannon and placating Richardson.

Cannon Air Force Base, bristling with F-16 "Fighting Falcon" multirole fighter jets, stands proposed by the Department of Defense for closure in this 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure Commission deliberations. But, thinking largely of the economic impact on Clovis and southeastern New Mexico, Richardson trumpeted the role of Clovis and Portales citizens who demonstrated on behalf of the base. Cannon is located barely 15 miles from the Texas-New Mexico line, and Clovis and Portales, combined, are roughly equal to Del Rio's population.

Financial impacts of BRAC decisions are not high on the list of considered criteria, but bases near small towns have not allowed commissioners to ignore the importance of their bases regarding economic health and community survival. Laughlin officials calculate an economic impact in the local community of \$585,000 every day, accruable to operation of the base and the 47th Flying Training Wing.

According to Bexar County Commissioner Lyle Larson, who attended the Crystal City meeting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, the proposal of one BRAC commissioner, Gen. Lloyd "Fig" Newton would have erased the DOD recommendation for Laughlin to receive 182 positions and several T-38C "Talon" jet trainers from Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

Larson, 46, is a nine-year, third-term representative on Bexar County Commissioners Court, and a member of the San Antonio Mission Group dedicated to saving and expanding the military missions surrounding the city.

DOD proposals presented to the BRAC Commission in May recommended closing Moody, and shifting missions, aircraft and personnel to Laughlin, Shepard Air Force Base, near Wichita Falls, Texas, and Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio. Newton, according to Larson, criticized the proposal, saying the lot should not be split up, but rather sent as a whole to provide a new mission for Cannon.

Newton, a retired four-star Air Force general, is former commander of the Air Education and Training Command, of which both Moody and Laughlin are installations. Newton is also a former F-16 pilot and member of the Air Force's crack aerial demonstration team, the Thunderbirds, who fly only F-16 "Falcons."

When the BRAC audience heard Newton's proposal to strip Laughlin, Shepard and Randolph of the expected growth increments, "Things started getting real hectic," said Larson. Newton tendered a formal proposal to his fellow commissioners just before lunch, Larson said, but BRAC Commissioner Admiral Harold W. Gehman Jr. opined that the commission would overstep its authority if it approved Newton's motion, in effect instructing DOD where to base specific aircraft.

"At lunch, they decided they needed to find out if such a recommendation was illegal. After lunch,

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Laughlin AFB, Texas



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Newton's proposal was still on the table, and Principi (Anthony J. Principi, commission chair) said he felt the proposal was out of order with the Commission's mandate, and said he'd vote against it," said Larson.

When Newton's motion came to a vote, results were four in favor, three opposed, and two abstained. "But the rules required a vote of at least five members to go against a DOD recommendation," said Larson, so the Newton proposal failed.

"But we're not out of the woods yet," Larson said, explaining that the commission did not concur with DOD recommendations to close Cannon. Rather, the BRAC commissioners gave the Air Force a five-year window through which the agency can find other missions for the New Mexico base.

"They voted to put Cannon Air Force Base in a sort of enclave status, basically keeping the base open, but they (Air Force) must make a decision by March 31, 2006," Larson said. Regarding a possible DOD reconsideration of adding Moody positions and aircraft to existing missions at Laughlin, Larson did not hesitate: "I don't think that's going to happen."

Thursday, Del Rio Mayor Dora G. Alcalá praised Principi's courage, sticking to his guns in the face of pressures from both DOD and fellow commissioners. "Basically, he's told them all, we're going to do what's best for this country," Alcalá said.

Alcalá is more than a little sympathetic to the concerns of Richardson and the residents of Clovis and Portales, N.M. She agrees with Newton's assessment of abundant ramp space and unencumbered airspace at Cannon. "On a clear day at Cannon Air Force Base, you can see forever," Alcalá said.

She also agreed with Larson's note of caution, in light of the commission's five-year reprieve for Cannon. "The most important thing that we have to keep our guard up about is (air space) encroachment," Alcalá said. While praising the advent of commercial airline service in Del Rio, she raised a caution flag about the future.

"Do we really want big airliners coming in here to possibly interfere with the mission of Laughlin Air Force Base?"

Final BRAC Commission recommendations must be turned over to President George W. Bush by close of business tomorrow. Bush then has until Sept. 23 to give a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" to the entire list. He may either approve it or reject it, with no opportunity to modify the list.

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Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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Sep 7, 7:33 PM EDT

Relief for Katrina on way to Arkansas from China, Russia, Israel

By ANNIE BERGMAN
Associated Press Writer

JACKSONVILLE, Ark. (AP) -- The consul general of China said Wednesday that 100 tons of relief supplies arriving from his country will help victims of Hurricane Katrina know that the Chinese people are standing with the United States in the face of a natural disaster.

"This was a chance to show our sympathy and support and to show that we're standing with Americans," said Hu Yeshun.

A shipment including bedding, clothes, tents and generators was loaded at Beijing and made its way toward the Little Rock Air Force Base after stopping in Anchorage, Alaska. Officials at Little Rock believed it to be the first Chinese plane carrying relief supplies to ever land at the base.

Lt. Kelly George said the base is acting as the international hub for hurricane aid from foreign governments. The first aid flights arrived Monday from Great Britain and Tuesday two Russian planes carrying water and ready-to-eat meals landed as well.

Planes from Italy, Spain and France have also brought supplies and the base is expecting planes from Egypt and Israel on Thursday, base officials said.

Katrina hit the Gulf Coast last week with 145 mph winds, displacing hundreds of thousands of residents.

Brig. Gen. Joseph Reheiser said Little Rock Air Force Base was chosen as the international hub because of its ability to handle large cargo planes and its proximity to the area affected by the storm.

"We're located close enough to help out and far enough away that we're not in any danger of that kind of weather coming in," Reheiser said.

Reheiser also said the relief effort was unique because the base has had 14 different international flights land and another 13 are scheduled to arrive through Friday morning. Planes from foreign countries rarely land at the Little Rock Air Force Base.

Reheiser said there was no way to know how long the base would continue to operate as the relief hub but said that, "as long as countries are willing to donate supplies, the base will be here to receive them."

The Little Rock Air Force Base also is supporting relief operations by flying C-130 planes to Louisiana and Mississippi to assist in the evacuation of the disaster zone. Thirty-seven airmen are deployed as part of Joint Task Force Katrina.

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Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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The foreign aid is taken off planes and stored at the air base, then tractor-trailers haul the cargo to the Gulf Coast.

The Chinese plane, a 747, is bringing in 100 tons of supplies valued at \$1.85 million. China also delivered the \$5 million to the relief effort.

"We are showing our sympathy in the face of such a disaster. We are showing the Chinese people's goodwill toward the American people," Wang Hanjiang, director of the foreign aid department of the Commerce Ministry, said in Beijing.

The supplies were wrapped in thick plastic and marked with the words "China donation" along with a picture of the Chinese flag.

Russia was sending an estimated \$760,000 worth of humanitarian aid in three planes scheduled to begin leaving Moscow as early as Wednesday for Arkansas, said Sergei Vlasov, spokesman for the Emergency Situations Ministry. That aid includes 121 tents, 4,000 blankets and 10,000 food packages, he said.

An El-Al 747 will carry more than 70 tons of relief when it arrives Thursday night. Supplies include infant formula, baby food, diapers, mineral water, dairy supplies, ready-to-eat meals, clothes, tents, beds, blankets, mattresses, stretchers, first aid kits, wheelchairs and other medical supplies.

"In times of need friends stand together. Israel's hopes and prayers are with the American people," Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon said in a statement.

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Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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TOP STORY >> Foreign aid arrives at base

By JOHN HOFHEIMER
Leader staff writer

At least 15 aircraft from as many as eight foreign countries will discharge their hurricane-relief supplies at Little Rock Air Force Base by Thursday, where airmen will load them onto commercial freight liners headed into the heart of the storm ravaged South, according to Lt. Jon Quinlan, base spokesman.

"Little Rock Air Force Base has played a vital role in (hurricane relief) efforts," Quinlan said. "We're proud to be involved. This is a chance to alleviate suffering and save lives, and that's extremely important to us."
"This is about the busiest time I can remember," he added.

Among the countries sending aid through the base, which has been designated as the hub for the international relief effort, are France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Egypt, Italy, Israel and the West Indies.

That's not the base's only contribution.

"As of this morning, we have flown 25 C-130 mission sin relief," Quinlan said Tuesday. Those missions have been everything from transporting sick and injured from Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans to transporting cargo to Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., and to other locations. "It's been a vital airlift in relief," he said.



Among the various aircraft that have delivered about 185 tons of aid to the base are the 747, DC8, C-5, AN 124 Russian jets, some C-130s and a CASA 235.

Airmen from logistics readiness use forklift loaders to unload the planes. The base expects another 250 tons by Thursday.

The aid includes water and meals ready to eat (MRE), Quinlan said. The Times of London reported that 50,000 meals had been airlifted already from Britain to the base, with blankets, tarps, camp beds and military tents likely to be shipped later in the week. The Times reported that British logistics experts would help coordinate distribution of aid from

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AETC News Clips

Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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about 50 countries and in-ternational organizations from around the world.

Many of the international crews are being housed at the base until their trip home, Quinlan said. "Little Rock Air Force Base stands ready to take on the hundreds of cargo tons coming in," he said. "This is an excellent opportunity to put our training to work."

An Office of U.S. Disaster Assistance is on the base serving as a liaison, and is responsible for contracting for the semi-tractor trailers taking the supplies south into the hurricane area, Quinlan said.

Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee directed the Arkansas Air National Guard's 189th Airlift Wing at Little Rock Air Force Base to active duty today to airlift evacuees from Louisiana to Fort Chaffee in northwest Arkansas.

"We're preparing to fly evacuees around the clock," said Col. Jim Crumpton, 189th Airlift Wing vice commander.

"We're calling in our aircrew members, C-130 maintainers and a few others to launch, recover and fuel the fleet.

"We have seven aircraft — six of ours and the Louisiana bird — available and ready to fly today," Crumpton said.

C-130 Hercules aircraft can carry up to 92 passengers per plane. As of Sept. 5, C-130 aircraft and airmen assigned to the 50th Airlift Squadron of the 463rd Airlift Wing had relocated more than 60 sick and injured hurricane victims from New Orleans to aeromedical evacuation hubs at Kelly Field, Texas, and Ellington Airfield, near Houston.

The base is also housing 173 airmen and dependents from Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., which took a direct hit from the hurricane.

"We will do everything we can to get families situated here and to be comfortable," said Brig. Gen. Joseph Reheiser, commander of the 314th.

The base also has 36 personnel deployed as part of Joint Task Force Katrina, including two from public affairs.

Most are support personnel such as drivers and medics.

Quinlan said the cooperation between the three groups on base has been important, including the 314th Air Education Wing, the 463rd Airlift Wing and the 189th Air National Guard.

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